

CIA 1-01 Left, Hans
Strickland, Chas.
Mollenhoff, Des
CIA 1-01 Helms

Tofte Threatens to Expose CIA Blunders

IOWAN KNOWS TOP SECRETS OF U. S. SPIES

Letter to Mason City Friend Revealed

By Clark Mollenhoff
(Of The Register's Washington Bureau)
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WASHINGTON, D. C. — Hans V. Tofte, a star CIA operative, indicates he has inside information about the Bay of Pigs, the Dominican Republic and Vietnamese operations that could create "embarrassing issues" for the big spy agency and for CIA Director Richard Helms.

In a letter to Charles E. Strickland, a friend from Mason City and Clear Lake, Ia., Tofte revealed that this analysis of the disaster of the Bay of Pigs and serious blunders in the Dominican Republic and Viet Nam were among papers seized at his home July 24 by CIA security officers.

Critical Analyses

In a letter to Strickland, Tofte indicated the CIA security



HANS V.
TOFTE

CHARLES E.
STRICKLAND

raid on his home might have been motivated by a desire to seize the highly critical analyses.

In the three-page letter, the 55-year-old former Mason City businessman outlined his differences with high agency officials since 1961, when he was outspoken in his criticism of certain of his superiors.

Tofte is paid \$25,000 a year and holds the Civil Service rank of GS 16. He is one of a mere handful of persons in the spy agency who has intimate knowledge of almost all CIA activities in recent years. He has been involved in undercover work for more than 25 years.

The Register learned Thursday that Tofte had written Strickland asking that he inform friends of the circumstances of his controversy with the CIA. He indicated he hopes to force an expose and a clean-up of top personnel at the CIA, and anticipates a difficult and bitter fight.

Strickland is retired president of the Peoples Gas & Electric Co. in Mason City.

"All I ask is for my true friends to trust me all the way to the bitter end," Tofte wrote. Most of the letter represented an attack on CIA director Helms, and carried the implication that Helms was one of "those who planned and executed the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion, who are still there 'in bigger and better jobs.'"

Tofte said that certain unnamed CIA officials "tried to railroad me out of the agency" in 1961, but failed.

He said CIA director Allen Dulles had lost control of the agency at the time of the Bay of Pigs.

He praised President Kennedy's appointment of John McCone to head the CIA. He did not mention Helms directly, but was critical of the selection of a CIA professional to head the agency.

Tofte revealed that he was at a secret meeting at the White House during the Kennedy administration, during which he warned of the efforts of professional CIA men to hide their blunders in connection with the Bay of Pigs.

He said he told unidentified White House personnel at that time, "The worst mistake the President of the United States could possibly make would be to put a CIA professional in the top spot of the agency."

He suggested that his friends in Mason City read the book, "The Invisible Government" to gain some impression of what he is up against.

He said the authors of the book, Tom Ross and David Wise, were harassed by the agency. He said his own wife, Marlys, has been subjected to surveillance in recent weeks.

"The day this behind-the-scenes setup, working under the protection of official secrecy, becomes strong enough by escaping rigorous congressional controls, we will have the beginnings of a police state in America.

"It could be terribly misused by a ruthless politician in the White House before Congress and the American people even knew it," Tofte said in his letter.

Urges Tight Control

Tofte said he does not agree completely with Senator J. W. Fulbright about the problems of the CIA, but feels that a tight congressional scrutiny of its operations is essential.

"I know what I am talking about and the agency knows that I know it," Tofte said.

At no point in the letter did he state that he would make all of the "embarrassing" information public, but the entire letter carried the implication that he will, in his own time.

The text of the letter follows:

"Mr. Chas. E. Strickland
"Mason City
"Iowa

"Dear Charles:

"Many thanks for your swift support in regard to the letter of introduction to Senator Hick-enlooper. I shall make use of it as appropriate.

"In order to understand what I am really involved in, I would recommend that you read a book titled 'The Invisible Government' very carefully. CIA did everything possible to squelch the publication of that book.

"The authors and their families were attacked ruthlessly, in fact, the entire professional machinery went into action to destroy and discredit them and ruin their position in society and their home life.

"However, the so called 'invisible government' was not yet quite strong enough to accomplish it.

"The day this behind-the-scenes setup, working under the protection of official secrecy, becomes strong enough by escaping rigorous congressional controls, we will have the beginnings of a police state in America.

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